22. A northern New Mexico barn.

6 TAOS TO LAS TRAMPAS - 36 MILES

0.0 MILES. Taos Plaza. Drive south on Highway 64.

3.5 MILES. Taipa turnoff; turn left on Highway 3.

4.4 MILES RIGHT. Torreón of the Vigil Family. Believed to be the only surviving torreón in New Mexico, this structure was originally windowless and had but one entrance. A trap door in the roof is said to have communicated with a polygonal second story made of logs and provided with loop holes. Here the settlers would assemble for protection when attacked by nomadic Indians.

Since the Vigils are mentioned by Dominguez in 1776 as one of two families living near their fields outside the walls of Taos Pueblo, this defense tower could go back to that time. Adjacent houses may utilize 18th century walls.

4.5 MILES LEFT. Penitente morada, date unknown. Unique to northern New Mexico is the morada—the meeting place of the Penitente Brotherhood known as Los Hermanos de Luz. The Brotherhood is a New Mexico offshoot of the Third Order of St. Francis, an organization founded by the Saint in 1221 for those of his followers who did not wish to become regular members of the Franciscan order, but who wanted to carry out Franciscan teachings in their lives. Among the 16th century Conquistadores of New Mexico were a number of members, including the first Governor of New Mexico, Juan de Oñate.

Although there is some controversy on their origin, the Third Order of St. Francis seems to have come into prominence in New Mexico after the missions were secularized by the Mexican government in 1834. When that government failed to send secular priests to replace the Franciscan friars, many communities found themselves without clergy. In this emergency members of the Third Order took on a large degree of spiritual leadership, but as they lacked theological training some irregularities and excessive practices like self flagellation developed. When the region was annexed to the United States (1845), the papacy felt that a purification of the church of New Mexico was expedient and in 1851 sent a French priest, Father Jean-Baptiste Lamy, to set things in order. Later the area was reorganized as a separate diocese and Lamy was named bishop. Lamy ran into opposition and resentment in some communities when he attempted to change current practices or send in new French-trained priests (viz. the confrontation with Father Martinez in Taos or Father Gallegos in Albuquerque). A certain competitiveness developed, especially in Taos under the leadership of Padre Martinez. Gradually the Penitentes went underground as they refused to give up their old practices and authority even at the risk of displeasing the hierarchy.

The focus of Penitente observances was Holy Week at which time the hermanos would retire to their morada outside the village, generally near the cemetery. There they would pass several days in prayer, religious observances, and self mortification, which came to a climax on Good Friday when a brother was sometimes bound to a cross (but not nailed).

A morada is a cross between a chapel and a house and has at least two rooms, a chapel with an altar but no heating, and the meeting room with a fireplace where the brothers took their meals brought in by the women. A third room used for storage and
for flagellation is also usually included. With small windows, often with solid shutters, the moradas have the appearance of early dwellings before there was window glass and while Indians were still a threat.

5.0 Miles Right. Durán chapel. The only recognizable remains of a prosperous hacienda of the early 19th century. The beautiful retable of 1829 from this private chapel was sold in 1930 to the Taylor Museum of Colorado Springs. Undoubtedly the eroded buildings adjacent to the chapel are part of the old hacienda.

5.3 Miles Right. Talpa church (tree ring dates 1840); its close grouping with houses suggests a 19th century fortified "plaza."

9.9 Miles. Fort Burgwin is a 1958-60 reconstruction of the stockade fort erected in 1853 to shelter a small company of U. S. soldiers sent to protect the area from nomadic Indians. The garrison remained here until 1860 and was not re-established after the Civil War. Location of the buildings was determined from excavations and their approximate appearance was obtained from sketches found in a diary of a soldier stationed there. Original stockade construction is recalled in the present reconstruction by a facing of split pine logs over concrete block.

19.1 Miles. Rockwall; intersection of Highways 3 and 75. Turn sharp right.

19.3 Miles Left. Rockwall tavern. About 100 yards behind and below the tavern but easily discernible from the highway is a flat roofed, log grist mill, the only one still in operation in this part of the state. The small gap in one log to the left of the door is the original window. The mill stones are turned by a horizontal mill wheel, an arrangement that seems to have been standard in the region. Before such mills, corn was ground by hand.

20.5 Miles Left. Placitas. The arrangement of houses around an oblong plaza with a church in the center suggests another fortified town, but most houses have disappeared or been rebuilt. The church with its round apse and tin roof is duplicated in several neighboring villages.

22.4 Miles Right. Vadito, a decentralized village suggesting a later date, has a rather ugly consolidated church (c. 1965) that backs against a pleasant, old church with a round apse. It is somewhat unusual in having the Penitente morada contiguous but not intercommunicating. Left of highway is a dilapidated wooden grist mill somewhat more recent than the log mill at Rockwall.

24.5 Miles. Peñasco intersection; turn left on Highway 73 to Rodarte. The strung-out disposition of Peñasco suggests a late development though a town existed in this part of the valley by 1796.

25.0 Miles Right. The hay barns and animal shelters built of logs along the river are typical of the mountain region. Farther up the valley, now the Santa Barbara Recreational Area, lumber operations were in full swing 1907-26. A temporary railroad was constructed in the valley to haul lumber, but logs were driven down the rapids below during spring runoff. Once in the Rio Grande river, logs were floated to Albuquerque to a railroad tie processing plant. Some 16 million ties were cut here.

26.0 Miles Left. Rodarte is another plaza-centered community though farm houses are also strung out along the irrigation ditch further up the valley. The church with round apse is similar to that at Placitas. A small adobe morada north of the plaza is recognized by large crosses in the yard and the small, shuttered windows.

Rodarte was the home of the carpenter, Alejandro Gallegos (d. 1920), whose paneled doors are one of the most distinctive expressions of folk art from this region. Once there were numerous doors by Gallegos in these villages, but antique dealers and collectors from the Santa Fe and Taos areas have cleared them from the valley.

27.1 Miles. Llano de San Juan Nepomuceno, a high agricultural community of late date. Here the flat mesa top is watered by irrigation taken from the Santa Barbara river on the north. The farm houses are dispersed freely over the mesa, and the church, remodelled about 1910, contains a painted retable signed by José de Gracias Gallegos dated 1864 (see the church at Las Trampas). Turn right on dirt road along south rim of bluff.

27.3 Miles. Another good morada unfortunately disfigured with hard plaster (1967) but before that plastered with mud. There are still a few wooden crosses in the cemetery.

28.3 Miles. Farmhouse, barn, threshing floor. The hillside log barn with a vertical board roof is picturesquely located on the edge of the hill; across from it a half-destroyed house that shows what happens when different descendants inherit portions of the same dwelling. The area between the barn and field once served as a threshing floor where wheat was ground with a crude log roller drawn by a horse.

28.9 Miles. The Hog Farm, one of the first of the several hippie communities to move to the Taos area, purchase land and attempt to revive the moribund agriculture of the area. The Hog Farm's "cash crop" is a traveling electric music and light show that has appeared on many college campuses.

30.4 Miles. Juncture with Highway 75, turn left.

30.6 Miles. Intersection with Highway 76; turn left for Las Trampas. If one were to continue straight, he would reach Picuris Pueblo in 4.0 miles. Once as large as Taos Pueblo, Picuris today is a small, disintegrated community. It has a few pre-Spanish puddled adobe rooms, but permission to view them is difficult to obtain.

32.5 Miles. Chamisal is a late 19th century decentralized community. Roads run down each side of the valley and connect at far end where there is a late church retaining the characteristic stepped profile despite the fact that the roof was always pitched and hence an inoperative transverse ceastory.

36.2 Miles. Las Trampas.